

LONG NINE MUSEUM
ATHENS IL

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NEW SALEM

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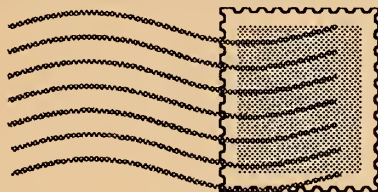


Illinois New Salem

Long Nine Museum

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



John R. Edin

A. Lincoln Long Nine Museum

August 3, 1997

Colonel Matthew Rogers settled near what would be known later as Athens, Illinois in about 1820. He built the first cabin constructed of clapboards and sawn board lumber in this area.

On January 2, 1828, he established the area's first post office in his home and named it Rogers Post Office. The citizens of New Salem received their mail at Rogers Post Office until the New Salem Post Office was established.

In 1831, Athens became a city, the same year that Abraham Lincoln arrived at New Salem. Athens is Menard County's oldest city.

Jonathan Dunn, an Athens merchant, had built a sawmill powered by a steam engine driving a circular blade when Lincoln was living in New Salem. The sawmill was advertised for sale in the *Sangamo Journal* newspaper in February 1833.

During 1831-1832, Col. Rogers constructed a building to be used as a general store and Athens' first post office. The structure he built remains standing and busy today and it is known as the A. Lincoln Long Nine Museum.

On November 4, 1831, Rogers moved the post office from his home into the building and changed the name from Rogers Post Office to Athens Post Office.

During this period, Lincoln borrowed books from Col. Rogers. Historians have written about this interchange and how Rogers' daughter Arminda taught the future president and Ann Rutledge. The copy of *Kirkham's Grammar*, the primary text they used, now resides in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

After Lincoln became New Salem's Postmaster, he would pick up mail when passing through Athens on trips to

and from Springfield, not yet our state's capitol city. The shortest path to Springfield from New Salem passed through Athens.

In 1834, the postmaster had also become a skilled surveyor, and he surveyed the Post Road which passed by the front of Rogers' general store and post office. The survey point Lincoln used remains today, just 40 feet from the building.

While a candidate running for the state legislature for the 3rd time, in 1836, Lincoln borrowed a horse from Mrs. Robert L. Wilson of Athens. He gave his first speech of that campaign while visiting Athens to borrow the horse.

On August 3, 1837, the citizens of Athens held a banquet for Abe Lincoln and eight other compatriot state legislators who had successfully worked for passage of legislation that led to relocation of the state capitol from Vandalia to Springfield. Together, their height added up to 54 feet. Since they were much taller than most men of their day, they had become known among the populace as the "long nine."

The banquet was held on the upper floor of Rogers' store. On the occasion, Lincoln led the long nine in a toast to the citizens of Athens, saying, "Sangamon County will ever be true to her best interest and never more so than in reciprocating the good feeling of the citizens of Athens and neighborhood!"

Not connected with the move of the state capitol to Springfield, two years later, the boundary of Sangamon County was redrawn, and Athens became a part of Menard County. The appreciation for the people of Athens, so sincere at the time of his toast not long before, had not been enough to prevent the redrawing of the boundary. James D. Allen, an Athens business man, wrote a letter to Lincoln in

which he expressed the dissatisfaction shared by many of this friends about the new boundary and also complained to William Butler. On January 26, 1839, Lincoln wrote a letter to Butler who had also shared his disapproval with the Illinois legislator. "The grounds of your complaint I will answer seriously. First, then, as to Athens, we have Allen's letter of which you speak, and although he did not in that letter, pretend that he was specially authorized to speak for the people of Athens, he did pretend, that he knew their feelings, and that he fairly expressed them — and further, Hall and Francis of Athens are now here, and I assure you, that they say nothing about 'giving us hell.' They are as good humored as I ever saw them."

It is a fact that the people of Athens were unhappy about being removed from Sangamon to the newly formed Menard. It seems that Lincoln either did not believe that the people of Athens were unhappy, or he chose to ignore Allen's letter. With credentials that included service from 1834 to 1837 as the Athens Postmaster, Allen was certainly in a position to know the feelings of his fellow citizens.

Lincoln's ties to Athens, forged in the early 1830s continued into the next decade. In 1841, Col. Rogers hired him to repossess his building from its recent purchaser. A copy machine reproduction of Lincoln's hand-written brief is displayed in the Long Nine Museum's history room.

Athens is located just seven miles east of New Salem State Park on the old Post Road and only 12 miles north of Springfield on Illinois Route 29. To reach Athens, "gateway to New Salem" from Interstate I-55, take the Williamsville exit.

A. Lincoln Long Nine Museum
200 S. Main
P.O. Box 362
Athens, IL 62613
217-636-8755

City of Athens

Clerk
Jack Morris

Mayor
George E. Cerar

Treasurer
Rhonda Ethell

A TOAST TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE LONG NINE MUSEUM PROCLAMATION

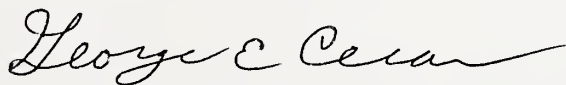
WHEREAS, On August 3rd 1837, the citizens of Athens held a banquet in honor of the Long Nine for removing the Old State Capitol from Vandalia to Springfield.

WHEREAS, In the upper story of the Col. Matthew Rogers building is the place the banquet and the toast was held.

WHEREAS, It to be known that Col. Matthew Rogers building was built in 1831-32. The upper room was used by the community for social gatherings.

WHEREAS, Col. Matthew Rogers building now known as the Abraham Lincoln Long Nine Museum is where Athens first Post Office was established on November 4, 1831. The general store and Post Office were located on the main floor.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, George E. Cerar, mayor of City of Athens, proclaim August 3, 1997, as a "TOAST TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE LONG NINE MUSEUM" in the City of Athens.



George E. Cerar
Mayor City of Athens

160th Long Nine Banquet Anniversar
Abraham Lincoln Long Nine Museum
Athens, Illinois

Badge list:

August 3, 1997

Dignitaries,

John R. Eden, Museum Director

Mayor George Cerar, Athens

Congressman, Ray LaHood

Senator, Larry Bomke

Representative, Raymond Poe

Republican County Chairperson Esther Fricke

Menard County Commissioner, Bob Anderson

Alderman Kenny Yocum, representing Petersburg

Melvin K. Richardson, Secretary 1972 Long Nine Inc.

Dr. Wayne Temple, Deputy Director Illinois State Archives,
Author of Abraham Lincoln from Skeptic to Prophet.

Lincoln Historian, Steven K. Rogstad Co-editor of The Many
Faces of Lincoln, selected articles from the Lincoln Herald.

Poet Jim Toal, Sangamon Valley Poet

Charles Ott, Mr. Lincoln

Staff:

Beth Bounds

Janet Eden,

Laura Bounds

Max Hendrikson,
Donated Col. Rogers
store ledger.

Mike Brodie

Joe Conger, Photographer

Tony Doellman, gristmill operator

Lyle Krueger, surveyor

John Winterbauer

Duane Weiss, surveyor

*John R. Edens Speech
August 3, 1997*

MAYOR CERAR; CONGRESSMAN RAY LAHOOD SENATOR LARRY BOMKE;
REPRESENTATIVE RAYMOND POE; DR. WAYNE TEMPLE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
ILLINOIS STATE ARCHIVE, AND OTHER HONORED GUEST.

WELCOME TO ATHENS AND TO THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN LONG NINE
MUSEUM.

IN THIS BUILDING 160 YEARS AGO TODAY, ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LONG NINE WERE HONORED AT A BANQUET
GIVEN BY THE CITIZENS OF ATHENS, HONORING THEM FOR THE ROLL
THEY PLAYED IN RELOCATING THE STATE CAPITAL FROM VANDALIA TO
SPRINGFIELD. OVER 100 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE BANQUET.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN THEN 28 YEARS OF AGE, GAVE A TOAST TO THE
CITIZENS OF ATHENS AND NEIGHBORHOOD.

TWO MEMBERS OF THE LONG NINE WERE NOT PRESENT.

100 YEARS LATER, IN 1937 ANOTHER BANQUET WAS HELD IN THIS
SAME BUILDING COMMEMORATING THE FIRST BANQUET. MANY
DIGNITARIES WERE PRESENT AT THE SECOND BANQUET. THE BANQUET
HAD NEWSPAPER AND RADIO COVERAGE.

HERE TODAY, AUGUST 3, 1997, WE STAND HONORING THE MEMORY OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THOSE EARLY SETTLERS OF THE ATHENS AREA.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS NO STRANGER TO ATHENS, AND HE HAD MANY
FRIENDS HERE. LINCOLN WHEN TRAVELING FROM NEW SALEM TO
SPRINGFIELD OFTEN PASSED THROUGH ATHENS. ATHENS BEING THE
MOST DIRECT ROUTE TO SPRINGFIELD.

I HAVE AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE AT THE END OF THE
TOASTING PROGRAM.

I NOW CALL ON THE MAYOR OF ATHENS GEORGE CERAR TO START THE
TOAST.

THE LEDGER USED BY COL. MATTHEW ROGERS IN THE GENERAL STORE
OF THIS BUILDING DURING THE 1830'S IS OFFICIALLY BEING
RETURNED IN NOVEMBER 1997. THE LEDGER IS BEING RETURNED BY
MR. MAX HENDRICKSON OF GIRARD; FORMERLY FROM ATHENS; WHO MANY
YEARS AGO SAVED THIS VALUABLE PIECE OF ATHENS HERITAGE FROM
BEING DESTROYED.

MAX, I THANK YOU IN BEHALF OF THE LONG NINE MUSEUM. THIS
LEDGER WILL BE COPIED AND DISPLAYED IN THE MUSEUM FOR VIEWING
BY THE PUBLIC. THE ORIGINAL WILL BE STORED IN A BANK VAULT.

IN CLOSING, MY TOAST IS AS FOLLOWS: ATHENS WILL FOREVER
REMEMBER THE LONG NINE AND ALL THOSE EARLY PIONEERS,
AND THAT ABRAHAM LINCOLN ONCE WALKED THE STREETS OF ATHENS.

160th Long Nine Banquet Anniversary
Abraham Lincoln Long Nine Museum
Athens, Illinois

August 3, 1997

Dignitaries toast list

John R. Eden, Museum Director

John R. Eden

Mayor George Cerar, Athens

George C. Cerar

Congressman, Ray LaHood

Senator, Larry Bomke

Larry Bomke

Representative, Raymond Poe

Raymond Poe

Republican County Chairperson Esther Fricke

Menard County Commissioner, Bob Anderson

Bob Anderson

Alderman Kenny Yocum, representing Petersburg

Kenny Yocum

Melvin K. Richardson, was the Secretary of the Long Nine organized in 1972. Mel played an important roll in the restoration of the Col. Matthew Rogers building.

Melvin Richardson

Dr. Wayne C. Temple, Deputy Director Illinois State Archives, Author of Abraham Lincoln from Skeptic to Prophet. Dr. Temple did the initial research for the Col. Matthew Rogers building restoration.

Wayne C. Temple

Lincoln Historian, Steven K. Rogstad, So-editor of The Many Faces of Lincoln, selected articles from the Lincoln Herald.

Steven K. Rogstad

Poet James E. Toal, Sangamon Valley Poet

James E. Toal

Charles Ott, Mr. Lincoln

Charles Ott

Visit the
Abraham
Lincoln

ong Nine Museum!



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stairs at the building that stands now
ere it stood then at 200 S. Main Street in
oric Athens, Illinois.

Visit the Abraham Lincoln Long Nine Museum!



It was official! Abraham Lincoln and his dedicated cadre of eight other Illinois legislators had won the General Assembly's approval to move the state capitol from Vandalia to Springfield. These nine men were called the "long nine" because they averaged over 6 feet in height, uncommon in that day and age. On August 3, 1837, the "long nine" were honored at a banquet held upstairs at the building that stands now where it stood then at 200 S. Main Street in historic Athens, Illinois.

Dioramas, artifacts and priceless art



Above: One of eight dioramas constructed by Art Sieving expressly for the Long Nine Museum, this scene depicts Abe Lincoln, the surveyor visiting Athens in 1834. In the background is the general store and post office, built about 1832. That building now contains the Long Nine Museum!

Other dioramas show Lincoln's ties to Athens, Illinois which he became familiar with long before he traveled to the upstart metropolis of Springfield. Scenes depict Abe, the railsplitter, the self-taught scholar, the story teller, the lawyer and yes, even Abe the politician. Each diorama adds dimension that brings to life the lessons learned in childhood history classes. Viewers learn about each scene with the touch of a button that activates a digital sound chip which shares more fascinating facts.

The epic journey that led from New Salem to Springfield to Washington, DC began during the years Abraham Lincoln worked in and around Athens, Illinois. This is the story we share at the Long Nine Museum.

s art speak of the almost-forgotten early days

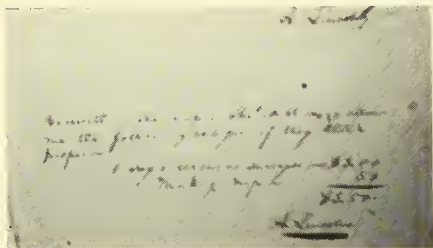
Internationally known artist Dr. Lloyd Ostendorf painted a 6 feet by 9 feet scene depicting the seven of the "long nine" who attended the 1837 banquet in Athens. That painting hangs on the west wall, inches from where the scene depicted took place. It shows Lincoln toasting the people of Athens, Illinois while thanking them for their help in bringing the state capitol to Springfield. The room is furnished with tables, chairs and accessories similar to those of that era. Shown below is a photograph of part of the Ostendorf painting.



Another original painting depicting New Salem in the early years was painted in 1952 by Chicago artist Joy Johnston Hodgen. Measuring 6 1/2 by 16 feet, this mural was the focal point of an area hardware store before finding a new home in the Long Nine Museum in 1973.

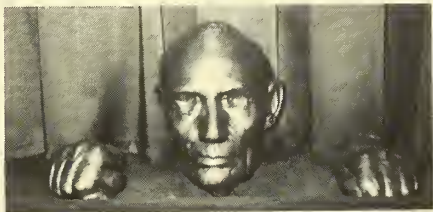
ARTIFACTS discovered in the building during its 1972 restoration and added since include a Harper's Ferry rifle, a candle chandelier, antique tools and more.

days of "The Great Emancipator."



DOCUMENTS which authenticate facts shared about Lincoln's Athens, Illinois connection, researched by historian Dr. Wayne C. Temple and site owner John Eden are displayed throughout the Long Nine Museum. Copies of this documentation are available for nominal fees.

You may never have heard of the "long nine" before visiting, but when you leave, you may know their names by heart!



LINCOLN LIFE MASK reproduction of the original made by Leonard Volk in 1860 provides a unique glimpse of the man as he was, not as depicted by an artist. This and other displays throughout the Long Nine Museum show our 16th president, the man many of his age would call "Abba" for "Father," as you will see him nowhere else!



*Endorsed by the
Lincoln Heritage Trail Foundation*

In 1832 only 14 years after Illinois won statehood, Colonel Matthew Rogers, a veteran of the War of 1812, built a general store in Athens and moved the town post office from his home to the northeast corner of the ground floor. The upstairs was used as a community room for meetings and banquets.

Soon after, young Abraham Lincoln passed through Athens on trips to Springfield. He visited Athens regularly during 1833 as New Salem's Postmaster and in 1834, when he surveyed what we today call the Post Road. As a surveyor, he left a marker that remains today only 40 feet northwest of the building that now stands as the Long Nine Museum.

Like another surveyor named George Washington, Lincoln went on to serve in our nation's highest calling. Perhaps from the White House, in troubled times, he called upon skills practiced years before in Athens, not to survey the land, but to hold it together.

HOURS

Open June 1 — September 30

Tuesday - Sunday Noon -- 5:00

Special, escorted, after hours tours for individuals or groups may be arranged by calling ahead: 217-636-8755.

Admission \$2.00 per adult

Children 6 to 12 — \$1.00

age five and under — free

Family rate — \$5.00

Group discounts available

Located in the heart of Lincoln Land!



From Interstate 55 — Take the Williamsville turnoff. Follow the road to Route 29 and turn right (north). Take the Athens turn off and follow the road to the only flashing stop light in town and turn left. We're located one block away.

From Springfield — Follow State Route 29 north past Capital Airport, past the stoplight at the Andrew Road junction and on to the Athens turnoff. Stay on the main road into town and turn left at the flashing stop light. We're at the southeast corner of the next intersection.

Abraham
Lincoln

Long Nine Museum
200 S. Main Street
(mailing address)
P.O. Box 362
Athens, Illinois 62613
217-636-8755

